

### III HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The modern downtown commercial core of Seattle has evolved for over one-hundred and fifty years from its beginnings in the early 1850s as a tiny pioneer settlement clustered near Henry Yesler's sawmill at the foot of Yesler Way to the 225+/- acre commercial, cultural and residential district we now know and treasure as downtown Seattle. The physical development of this unique geographic area, as individual building sites have been developed and redeveloped multiple times, was influenced by a complex set of economic factors and historic circumstances that shaped the current urban environment in obvious tangible and subtle intangible ways. As downtown Seattle evolved and expanded it was both shaped by broad national and international events and had an influence on city-wide and regional development patterns.

#### **Settlement, Land Use Patterns & Zoning History**

##### *Community Establishment*

The settlement-era community of Seattle was essentially carved out of dense forest along a relatively steep hillside above Elliott Bay where the protected deep water harbor could function as an ocean-going port. As the community became established and was incorporated as a town in 1869, it gradually accommodated industrial, commercial, social and residential functions within a concentrated area near Front and Commercial Streets (now First Avenue and First Avenue S.) and Yesler Way. Due to its remoteness, the town grew slowly and evolved in a laissez-faire manner with land use and planning decisions made based on public health and transportation necessities.

The surviving downtown grid street system is a legacy of the three original plats delineated by the city's major founders: Carson Boren; William Bell; and Arthur Denny. They laid out their individual land claims and correlated streets to follow the adjacent shoreline, rather than according to a uniform compass point, creating distinctive angular street intersections within the overall grid. As established, this street grid pattern influenced the future form of the downtown area, its network of streets and blocks, and dictated the future relationships between downtown buildings.

The earliest settlement was composed of wood-frame, plank and clapboard buildings that were typically one to two stories in height with gabled shingle roofs - built with locally abundant materials. Commercial buildings were clustered along Front and Commercial Streets and exhibited utilitarian false front designs typical of newly established communities throughout the American West. One particularly notable exception to this pattern was the Territorial University building (1861) that was constructed in a formal Classical Revival mode with ionic columns. It was situated some eight blocks to the north of Yesler Way at prominent location on Denny's Knoll, which became known as the University Grounds.

By the early 1880s, the bustling commercial center had evolved to include elaborate architect-designed wood-frame buildings and modest brick and stone masonry structures,

two to three stories in height. By then, a scattered collection of fashionable residences and small dwellings dominated the hillside above the bay stretching from Cherry Street to Pike Street. Further north and above the bay, a small community had been established near First Avenue and Bell Street, known as Belltown. By the mid-1880s large mansions began to be constructed on First Hill and Queen Anne Hill, a distance from growing commercial, industrial and port activity. Indicative of an established population and the degree of residential development, two substantial schools - Central School (located at Seventh Avenue and Marion Street) and Denny School (at Sixth Avenue and Wall Street) - were built in 1883 and 1884. While residential concentrations grew to the north and east of the commercial center, industrial growth and port activity became more concentrated along the mouth of the Duwamish River and southern tidelands portions of Elliott Bay.

### *Post-Fire Reconstruction*

The destruction of 64 blocks of the commercial buildings and waterfront industrial and shipping facilities in the fire of 1889 brought a dramatic end to these districts, which had evolved over the prior three and half decades. City leaders and local entrepreneurs immediately began to plan to rebuild commercial buildings and industrial facilities in anticipation of a future population for 100,000 people, several times the actual size of the community. The reconstruction effort adhered to new building code provisions that mandated safer and more fire resistant building construction and brought about a new urban scale and design character within the commercial core. Streets were regraded, modern water and sewer utilities were installed, and First Avenue and Yesler Way were widened to relieve growing traffic congestion.

The well-established residential district survived the fire; however, by 1889 new residential districts were being established well beyond the original downtown residential district. While specific geographic areas that had been dominated by industrial, commercial and residential uses began to be more clearly defined, the reconstructed commercial district remained very diverse. Residential hotels, flats and lodging houses were typically located above retail storefronts and various commercial, warehouse, entertainment and manufacturing uses were intermixed on the same city block. Furthermore, individuals from a wide range of economic levels lived and worked in relatively close proximity to one another.

The discovery of gold in the Yukon in 1896 prompted a major influx of people traveling to Seattle, which emerged as a primary embarkation point for those traveling to northern British Columbia and Alaska. After what had been a period of economic stagnation, the Klondike Gold Rush triggered unprecedented economic growth and dramatic subsequent population increases. Spurred by new economic prosperity, the City began to undertake projects that would drastically reshape the city's topography. Beginning in the late 1890s, hills were removed, tunnels and canals constructed, streets regraded, and valleys and tidelands filled in order to facilitate the movement of goods and people and the expansion of commercial and industrial activity. These major engineering efforts, which continued for nearly three decades, addressed various transportation and civil engineering



challenges and shaped the future of the burgeoning downtown commercial district in significant ways.

### *Early Twentieth Century Growth*

By the early 1900s, the first steel-frame, highrise buildings began to be constructed along Second Avenue to the north of Yesler Way and explosive population growth occurred as the city limits grew far beyond the original residential and commercial districts. This phenomenon brought about local interest in city planning strongly influenced by the broader City Beautiful movement. The nationally recognized Olmsted Brothers firm was hired to plan a park and boulevard system that remains a legacy within neighborhoods throughout the city. During this era, efforts were begun by the Washington State Chapter of the AIA to promote a plan for future development in downtown Seattle. A variety of concepts and proposals were promoted until the visionary *Plan of Seattle* was prepared in 1911 by Virgil G. Bogue. Based on Beaux Arts design ideals, the Bogue Plan - as it became known - addressed a 150 square mile area and included concepts for future port and harbor facilities, railroads, street car lines, roads, streets and highways. A centerpiece of the plan was a proposed monumental civic center to be located in the newly regraded area, known as the Denny Regrade to the north of Virginia Street where Denny Hill had previously stood. The Bogue Plan generated great controversy and proved to be unpopular and infeasible for political and economic reasons. Principal among the opponents were property owners within the older commercial core near Yesler Way who feared a decrease in their property values. In the end, only the plan's proposed harbor development concepts were actually implemented

In 1907, the University of Washington regents successfully negotiated a long-term lease of the former University Grounds that encompassed several contiguous blocks between Seneca and Union along both sides of Fourth and Fifth Avenues. While the University had relocated to its current north end campus in 1894, it was not until early 1908 that a comprehensive master plan for the redevelopment of what became known as the University/Metropolitan Tract was finalized and made public. The ambitious scheme called for a concentration of ten-story business blocks unified by a Beaux Arts design and a formalized spatial relationship. The successful lease and this visionary plan signaled that the commercial district would certainly shift northward and that Fourth and Fifth Avenues would become major thoroughfares.

Commercial development and retail activity had been concentrated along First Avenue ever since the earliest street regrading efforts had occurred in the late 1870s. Pike Street also functioned as a main transit route between Lake Union and the central waterfront and by the early 1900s the area around First Avenue and Pike Street was a center of small-scale commercial activity and residential hotels. The Pike Place Public Market was formally established in 1907 at the foot of Pike Street and triggered additional hotel and commercial development in the immediate vicinity.

The opening of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition in June 1909 generated further notice of Seattle as a major port and emerging city. The exposition and fair

celebrated Seattle's economic and cultural relationships bordering the North Pacific Ocean. It attracted some 3.7 million visitors and appears to have generated significant additional downtown commercial and hotel development. Another major event occurred in 1911, when both the Union Pacific and Milwaukee Road Railways began to provide direct service to Seattle and two substantial railway passenger stations were constructed at the south end of downtown and away from the busy working waterfront.

By 1910 the commercial core had shifted northward and significant commercial real estate development was occurring within the former residential district. By then, regulations had been adopted that limited building heights to 200 feet - or sixteen stories high - and in 1912 the City government enacted an innovative ordinance that governed building heights in greater detail according to lot coverage and set particular construction requirements. Following a nationwide trend, several major highrise buildings were constructed - primarily located along Second and Third Avenues. Distinctive multi-story civic, commercial and hotel buildings were also being built as the urban scale and extent of the commercial district changed dramatically prior to World War I. With the opening of the elegant five-story Frederick and Nelson Department Store at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street in 1919, the fashionable retail center made a rather dramatic northward shift from Second Avenue and Marion Street.

#### *Modern Era of Zoning and Commercial Use*

The city's earlier, haphazard growth had allowed for a mixture of uses in proximity to one another. However, outright land use conflicts became more apparent as the scale and scope of downtown commercial and outlying residential neighborhood development increased. Regulations to segregate various types of activity within the city and to limit the intensity of any one use became a necessity. A local Zoning Commission was created in 1920 and in 1923 Seattle adopted its first ordinance that identified specific areas for specified uses. The zoning code allowed the most densely concentrated - although regulated - commercial development to occur in the downtown core. Over the following seven years the downtown core was transformed by the addition of highly distinctive office towers, major hotels and movie theaters primarily designed by skilled local architects. Virtually all remnants of the old residential district had been removed or destroyed by 1930. As the density of commercial uses intensified during this era, the impact of the automobile became apparent and the need for downtown automobile services and storage facilities increased.

The economic depression of the 1930s brought a fundamental halt to downtown real estate development and commercial construction. This period of stagnation extended through the World War II era as patterns of use in downtown Seattle remained virtually unchanged. The postwar era brought about the transformation of the region and the city's urban form, basically in response to the increased role of automobile transportation. Postwar planning efforts placed a heavy emphasis on the creation of modern traffic thoroughfares and expressway designs intended to facilitate easy access to and use of the downtown commercial core. By 1957, a new zoning ordinance was adopted as part of a Comprehensive Plan that directed new growth into patterns other than those that existed.



Rather than documenting and organizing existing patterns of use and development, the new plan strongly encouraged a somewhat different concentration of commercial office and retail development of a more regional nature and with new formulas for controlling height, bulk and lot coverage. These regulations took effect in the late 1950s and guided the first new wave of building construction since 1930. Modern highrise curtain wall designed buildings were subsequently constructed in sharp contrast with the older buildings that then characterized downtown Seattle.

In 1963, the Downtown Comprehensive Plan - known as the Monson Plan - was adopted by City Council. This ambitious scheme addressed the ever-increasing and complex challenges related to modern automobile traffic, parking, commercial development and zoning issues. Following modern planning principals drawn from popular suburban shopping center development concepts, the plan envisioned a ring road system and modern plazas, pedestrian malls and parking facilities that would replace older areas on the periphery of the commercial core including the blighted post-fire commercial district, by then known as Pioneer Square, and the deteriorated Pike Place Public Market. Many provisions of the proposed zoning regulations were incorporated into the city's zoning code and influenced the design of major highrise towers, especially the inclusion of open plazas. By the late 1960s a new breed of much taller modern office towers began to drastically change the physical character and scale of downtown Seattle. However, again only a few elements of the larger vision of the adopted plan were ever realized.

By the mid-1960s the adverse impacts of various urban renewal efforts in tandem with (U.S. Interstate 5) freeway construction, which severed the commercial district from the First Hill neighborhood, had mobilized citizen activists to question prior planning decisions. Further potential destruction of historic neighborhoods triggered opposition to continued expressway construction and urban renewal projects and generated support for local historic preservation efforts. In 1970, a municipal ordinance was adopted that laid the groundwork for the preservation and restoration of the Seattle's oldest commercial district, Pioneer Square. After a drawn out citizen-driven battle with city planners and elected officials, a public initiative/ballot measure was passed in 1971 to use urban renewal funding, which was initially earmarked for removal purposes, to preserve and rehabilitate the Pike Place Market. In 1973, the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance established a city-wide program for the preservation of historic and architecturally significant properties, a great number of which are located in the downtown commercial core.

### **Regrading, Transportation & Commercial Development Patterns**

#### *Development Patterns within the Settlement Community & Pre-Fire Townsite*

Seattle's earliest economic base was focused on timber harvesting, lumber milling and coal extraction activities that were all facilitated by maritime trade and market demands outside the region, particularly in San Francisco. While some rudimentary land transportation routes were in place, they were not necessarily required. The steep grades, natural barriers and varied topography of the early settlement community significantly

limited the movement of goods and people in horse drawn vehicles. Therefore, regrading projects within the townsite began by 1876 and continued into the 1930s. By providing improved accessibility, major regrading and engineering efforts were instrumental in facilitating transportation and directed commercial expansion. In turn, new urban development patterns occurred and land values increased.

The earliest major regrading work occurred in 1876 when Front Street (First Avenue) was leveled from Yesler Way north to Pike Street, an effort that involved bridging and filling a deep ravine at Seneca Street, the removal of a hill blocking the foot of Cherry Street and filling deep gullies around James Street. This more passable route triggered commercial development along First Avenue and near Pike Street, and a small residential and commercial enclave developed further north at Bell and Battery Streets near the Seattle Barrel Factory. After 1882, when Second Avenue was regraded to Pine Street, finer homes, mansions and small business blocks began to be rapidly constructed further north and uphill.

Second and Third Avenues remained impassable due to steep grades to the north of Pine Street at the base of Denny Hill. Pike Street provided an eastern route around Denny Hill to a growing residential and industrial community at the south end of Lake Union. Pike Street followed a valley between the hills and became an important link to smaller communities situated a distance from the original townsite clustered near Yesler Way and Front Street. A railroad line ran along this route that was primarily used to deliver coal mined in east King County and shipped via rail and barges to storage bunkers at the foot of Pike Street.

In 1878, Fifth Avenue was cleared of vegetation and stumps as far north as Virginia Street and the following year the first wood planks were laid along Yesler Way. Over the following 15 years most downtown streets were surfaced this way or with cedar blocks. Brick or stone paved street paving methods were not commonly used until c.1900.

By the mid-1870s, the city's waterfront was a busy transportation center with piers crowded by ocean-going merchant ships and a "mosquito fleet" of steamers that provided regular service to other settlements and communities around Puget Sound. Physical growth of the town remained concentrated near Yesler Way and paralleled the shoreline as docks, shipping and industrial activity expanded along the tidelands and waterfront. Maritime commerce and industry spawned related commercial enterprises located further uphill and away from the shoreline. New commercial blocks, retail businesses, lodgings, entertainment and professional services were gradually established northward and eastward as regrading and paving projects improved uphill access. As commercial and industrial activity intensified, adjacent land values increased and new residential development gradually moved ever further uphill and more distant from the busy waterfront.

Early horse-drawn streetcars ran along First and Second Avenues to Pike Street with some traveling on to Belltown or Queen Anne Town or east to connect to Lake Union steamboats that traveled to enclaves at Latona and Fremont. [By 1889, modern electric

streetcars would follow these same essential routes.] Private streetcar service along Second Avenue drew individuals north to a burgeoning residential district and away from an increasingly chaotic, noisy and dirty “downtown” district. By the mid-1880s, a large assortment of single-family homes extended all the way from James Street to Pike Street with few hotels or lodging houses north of Cherry Street and east of First Avenue. Commercial enterprises within the residential district were small-scale and principally located near Union Street and Third Avenue.

The largest uphill homes were typically situated on spacious ¼ block sites and concentrated nearer Cherry and Marion Streets. A fairly dense collection of smaller houses and cottages extended further uphill and northward. Intermixed among the residential district were some rowhouses, double-houses, meeting and fraternal halls and numerous churches. By the mid-1880s several large mansions had begun to be constructed in newer and more elite neighborhoods on First Hill and the along the south slope of Queen Anne Hill.

As the town grew outward in acreage it also grew upward. By the early 1880s, three-story buildings began to be commonly built and a five-story opera house dominated the streetscape at First Avenue and Cherry Street. In addition to the distinctive Territorial University building that was prominently located on Denny’s Knoll, the hillside above Elliott Bay was also dominated by Sister’s (Providence) Hospital at Fifth Avenue and Spring Street.

In 1884 Seattle was finally linked via the Northern Pacific Railroad to a national railway network, an event that triggered population growth and increased commercial and residential development. The new rail line was carried on elevated wooden trestles above the Duwamish River tidelands and passed along the edge of the commercial district to a passenger station located at the foot of Columbia Street where increased hotel and commercial development subsequently occurred.

By the late 1880s, relatively dense residential development had expanded north of Virginia Street and across Denny Hill, as well as to lower Queen Anne Hill and Lake Union and east along Yesler Way and First Hill. Additional large and elaborate residences and churches had been constructed further uphill overlooking the bay and there was an increased density of dwellings located between University and Pike Streets to the NE of the University Grounds. A modest concentration of commercial buildings was situated at the NE corner of Pike Street and First Avenue with numerous residences located along Pike Street. Small rowhouses and cottages appear to have been concentrated to the east and south of the commercial area at Yesler Way and nearer the industrialized tideflats.

#### *Post-Fire Commercial Development*

The fire of 1889 destroyed 64 blocks of commercial enterprises and industrial buildings along the waterfront to the south of Cherry Street. An important factor in the rapid reconstruction effort was that the nearby and well-established residential district



survived. Subsequent commercial reconstruction adhered to new building code provisions that stipulated safer and more fire resistant construction methods and materials. The modern commercial district that arose over the following two years remained concentrated near Yesler Way and First Avenue. Massive load-bearing stone, brick and heavy timber structures were constructed that utilized decorative terra cotta, cast iron, and modern elevator technology. The urban scale of the city was significantly changed as substantial five-story buildings began to characterize the reconstructed commercial district. Facades uniformly met the street edge and individual land parcels were typically developed to utilize the full frontage and lot area. Continuous blockfronts of commercial offices, hotels, banks and wholesale houses began to dominate the new streetscapes.

While the new commercial district remained fixed within five blocks of Yesler Way and First Avenue, substantial commercial construction gravitated further north along First and Second Avenues and toward the well-established residential district. First Avenue to the north of Yesler Way became a major shopping street. As modern business blocks and the growing retail trade expanded uphill, Second Avenue to the north of Marion Street remained largely residential. Gradually the southern portion of Second Avenue between Yesler Way and Marion Street became a second major north-south business thoroughfare. Step grades limited foot and horse-drawn carriage traffic further uphill to Third Avenue, which remained dominated by residences and churches.

Scattered within the commercial core and to some smaller degree within the residential district were smaller enterprises like cabinetmakers, machine shops, livery stables, and milliners. Warehouses and wholesale businesses gravitated to the south of the commercial district and along the working waterfront. Western Avenue began to be dominated by wholesale produce warehouses and manufacturing activities. Heavy industrial activities became more concentrated even further to the south of the commercial core as tidelands were filled to accommodate lumber milling, manufacturing, coal storage and associated shipping and railway movement facilities.

In order to create additional industrial land areas to the south of the commercial district, as well as to create opportunities for commercial expansion further northward, major regrading efforts began in 1895. Under the direction of City Engineer R.H. Thompson, various projects were initiated with the intention of reducing the steepest slopes, eliminating the obstructing hills and filling tidelands. In 1897, First Avenue was further regraded and paved north from Pike Street to Denny Way. This was followed in 1903 when Second Avenue began to be extended and paved northward. By 1908, the major task of removing all of Denny Hill began in earnest. It would take over twenty years to complete the removal of Denny Hill and in the process Fourth Avenue at Blanchard Street would be lowered in elevation by some 107 feet.

Streetcar service had been electrified in 1889. By 1891 thirteen separate streetcar lines were operating throughout the city, which by then had geographic limits extending east to Lake Washington and north to 85<sup>th</sup> Street. Suburban residential development became increasingly more dispersed as housing construction projects occurred at significant

distances from the commercial core, industrial activity, and the older residential district. By 1900, more than 29 street railway or cable car lines were in operation, many constructed by private entrepreneurs to promote residential real estate holdings. The expeditious development of suburban residential neighborhoods after the turn of the century occurred in tandem with the rapid northern expansion of the commercial district and the gradual absorption of the old residential area by commercial real estate development.

### *Early Twentieth Century Commercial District Expansion*

The Klondike Gold Rush triggered unprecedented economic growth that resulted in explosive population growth and, in turn, the rapid physical expansion of the commercial district after the turn-of-the-century. During this era numerous residential properties, including large mansions that were only 20 years old, were removed and/or relocated in order to accommodate large commercial and civic building projects. The increased pressure for commercial development brought about the first broad scale local planning efforts - influenced by the City Beautiful movement – intended to guide future downtown development. Various civic center plans were proposed between 1905 and 1911; however, none were ever fully adopted or implemented. The legacy of these efforts is reflected to some degree in several extant buildings within the commercial core, including: the Central Building (1906-08); and the Securities Building (1912-13). Unfortunately, two of the most architecturally distinctive public buildings to be constructed during this era and influenced by such grand schemes were lost during the 1960s; the Carnegie Public Library (1902) and the Government Post Office Building (1903).

Modern urban architectural scale and design character began with the construction of the earliest steel-frame highrise buildings in the commercial district; the extant 14-story Alaska Building built in 1903-04 at Second Avenue and Cherry Street and the 12-story American Savings Bank/Empire Building (1904-06, destroyed) at Second Avenue and Madison Street. In 1906, the extant seven-story Eitel Building at Second Avenue and Pike Street was the earliest substantial commercial building to be built as far north as Pike Street. Major commercial buildings were subsequently built along Pike Street, including: People's Bank Building (1906, destroyed) at the NE corner of Second Avenue; and the Northern Bank and Trust Company Building (1906-09) at the NE corner of Fourth Avenue. By 1905, a concentration of banking enterprises and specialty/department stores had been established along Second Avenue near Marion Street.

The Rialto Building (1894, destroyed) at Second Avenue and Madison, housed the Frederick and Nelson Department Store, which was one of several major retail enterprises that gradually made Second Avenue a fashionable shopping district, including the Bon Marche Store (1896, 1902, 1911, destroyed) at the SW corner of Second Avenue and Pike Street and the extant Stone, Fisher & Lane Store (Galland Building, 1906). Three more major retail enterprises, including: the J.A. Baillaergeon & Co. (1907), MacDougall and Southwick Store (1907, Chapin Building, destroyed) and the original Rhodes Department Store (1907, destroyed) were also located along Second Avenue.

By 1905, numerous brick hotels were already clustered near First Avenue and Pike Street and further up Pike Street at Third Avenue. A particularly significance boom in downtown hotel development occurred between 1906 and 1910 in conjunction with improved economic prospects, population growth and in anticipation of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition of 1909.

Until 1905, a steep bank ran along the east side of First Avenue from Stewart to Lenora and Blanchard Streets and limited access and commercial real estate development to the north of Pine and Virginia Streets. From 1890 until 1905, The Washington (a.k.a. Denny) Hotel dominated the north ends of Second and Third Avenues along the south side of Denny Hill above Stewart and Virginia Streets. Surrounded by small dwellings, flats and tenements, the removal of the hotel and the regrading of the hillside, beginning in 1904, facilitated commercial expansion. Major post-regrade construction at the far north end of Second and Third Avenues included: the seven-story Moore Hotel and Theater (1907); the nine-story Standard Furniture Company Store and Warehouse (1908), and the 14-story New Washington Hotel (Josephinum, 1908) all built almost immediately after the initial regrading of Denny Hill. By 1910, the nearby land values had risen dramatically with lots that were valued at \$2,500 prior to the regrade being sold for up to \$15,000.

The Seattle Electric Company car barns complex dominated the area near Fifth Avenue and Olive Way with other livery barns and stables, and tenements, flats and cottages located in its vicinity. As a result of the earthmoving work, Westlake Avenue was cut through from the north to Pike Street in 1905 and provided a more direct traffic connection to the growing downtown business district.

After much debate and discussion, railroad interests and local officials agreed that a railroad tunnel should be constructed to reduce what had become a dangerous tangle of railroad traffic along the waterfront. The tunnel was built under the entire downtown area and extended from Washington Street at Third Avenue to Alaskan Way at Stewart Street. Completed in 1905, it also facilitated efficient freight and passenger movement and ensured unpaired future downtown commercial development.

Besides Denny Hill and railroad reorganization, one other *major* factor limited northward commercial expansion, the former University Grounds site. This 10-acre tract on Denny's Knoll was essentially an island in the midst of the expanding commercial district. It was not intersected by any streets until Fourth Avenue was cut through in 1904. By 1905, large mansions and family homes continued to dominate Third and Fourth Avenues between Columbia and University Streets; however, several had been converted to boarding houses or relocated due to increased land values. By then, apartment houses and flats were typically situated on the western slope of First Hill and along Sixth Avenue. Intermixed among the older residences and new commercial construction was a new Beaux Arts designed Government Post Office Building (1902, destroyed) constructed on the NE corner of the University Grounds at Third Avenue and Union Street, and a new Seattle Post Intelligence Building (a.k.a. Stimson Building, 1904, destroyed) at Fourth



Avenue and Union Street. Other major construction during this era that signaled the further transformation of the old residential district included the Beaux Arts inspired Seattle Public Library (1903-06, destroyed), the Rainier Club (1902) and Seattle General Hospital (1900, destroyed). During this era several large commercial buildings were designed and promoted; however, in several cases only an initial partial phase of construction was actually built or realized.

#### *Northward Shift of Commercial District and Retail Core*

By 1910 a considerable amount of new commercial construction had occurred along the length of Second Avenue north of Marion Street and along other north-south thoroughfares. The University/Metropolitan Tract had begun to be developed by the long-term lessee the Metropolitan Building Company with the construction of the Beaux Arts inspired White Building (1908, destroyed), Henry Building (1909, destroyed), Cobb Building (1909) and the Metropolitan Theater (1910, destroyed).

With the defeat of the *Bogue Plan*, which proposed a massive civic center near Third Avenue and Lenora Street, plans could proceed for the construction of the long-planned Securities Building (1912-13), an ornate, ten-story, terra cotta clad office building. at Third Avenue and Virginia Street Two other early entirely terra cotta clad commercial projects followed at other northern locations; the stylish ten-story Joshua Green Building (1913) and the first major motion picture theater building in downtown, the flamboyant Coliseum Theater (1914-16). In 1914, the owners of the Frederick and Nelson Department Store purchased property at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street – considered to be a significant distance from their fashionable store at Second Avenue and Marion Street - and announced the intention to build to a modern five-story building, thus solidifying the location of the future downtown retail core. Although the 18-story Hoge Building (1909-11), 42-story Smith Tower (1914) and the King County Courthouse (County –City Building, 1914-17) functioned to anchor the former commercial center near Yesler Way, the center of commercial activity had shifted northward.

Second Avenue continued to serve as the major downtown commercial thoroughfare for several decades – in addition to three of the five major department stores as well as the Smith Tower, the city's tallest skyscraper until 1968, the street included the largest office buildings, leading furniture stores, a distinct concentration of the biggest commercial and oldest pioneer banks and several of the leading hotels, including the Savoy Hotel (1906, destroyed). The street was preeminent due to the fact that it provided an easy and direct route for the movement of traffic and goods between railroad and wholesale terminals to the south and the thriving retail, business and residential areas to the north and east. Well into the 1930s, Second Avenue remained the principal arterial roadway through the downtown commercial core for those traveling by electric streetcar, private or commercial motor vehicle and for passengers making connections to water-based transportation on Elliott Bay.

The economic prosperity of the 1920s stimulated the development of numerous major highrise and commercial block office buildings, as well as smaller-scale bank and

specialty retail stores, major hotels including apartment hotels, club buildings and entertainment facilities. The northward expansion of commercial development ultimately led to the destruction of Seattle's original residential district. Distinctive and highly ornate mansions on large lots, modest family homes, rowhouses and flats, and vernacular cottages and dwellings were gradually removed or demolished. By 1930, virtually all residential properties had been eliminated - as well as several immediate post-fire commercial buildings - due to regrading and commercial real estate development. The few notable exceptions to this pattern include: the Martin Van Buren Stacy house (1883-84) at Third Avenue and Marion Street, which was converted to a 20-room boarding house and later used in conjunction with an adjacent restaurant (Maison Blanc) until it was destroyed by fire in 1961; and the Colman Mansion, which was converted to operate in conjunction with the Oakland Hotel (1909) at Fourth Avenue and Columbia Street and survived until it was destroyed during the post-war era.

In 1919, the entire electric streetcar system became a municipally-owned operation. However, the system failed to provide adequate service and continued to face economic difficulties. One major factor was that after World War I, the use of private automobiles changed the way downtown Seattle functioned. Surface parking lots - many of which included a small gas station building - became a part of the commercial core or were located on its periphery. By the late 1920s, large parking garages - some that could store hundreds of automobiles - were a lucrative and essential part of downtown commerce. During this era, automobile showrooms and dealerships were clustered along upper Pike Street on First Hill and Capitol Hill, and Westlake Avenue became increasingly populated by motor vehicle sales and automobile service-related businesses.

The national economic collapse brought on by the Great Depression during the 1930s brought downtown real estate development to a virtual halt. During this era the older post-fire era commercial district of Pioneer Square, which had remained essentially unchanged since the 1890s, became even more stagnant. Known as "skid road" its old hotel buildings and small commercial businesses (as well as those lining First Avenue and near the Pike Place Market) provided inexpensive housing and services for an increasingly transient and displaced low-income population. Few major downtown construction projects were undertaken after 1930 with two exceptions being the U.S. Federal Courthouse (on the former Sister's of Providence Hospital site) at Fifth Avenue and Seneca Street and the F.W. Woolworth Company store at Third Avenue and Union Street, both completed in 1940, during the build up to World War II.

Downtown property and business owners also became concerned about parking needs and traffic impacts in the commercial core as retail activity began to be decentralized to neighborhoods and smaller outlying commercial districts. During this era most north-south vehicular traffic was channeled directly through the commercial core with an ever-increasing numbers of vehicles following a principal route along Westlake Avenue, Fourth Avenue and Fourth Avenue South to East Marginal Way. Due to mounting traffic congestion the concept of diverting traffic around, rather than through downtown Seattle, began to be seriously considered. In 1938 the municipally-owned streetcar system declined into bankruptcy and funds were made available - typically from automobile, tire

manufacturers and oil companies - to re-equip the entire system with rubber-tired motor buses and trackless electric trolley cars. By 1941, all of the streetcar rails had been removed for use as war materials.

### *Mid-twentieth Century Commercial Development Trends*

The Lacy W. Murrow Bridge, the innovative concrete floating bridge across Lake Washington opened in 1941. Once the war effort was over, it facilitated modern suburban development and the beginnings of urban flight that intensified during the 1950s and 1960s. The construction of the Northgate Shopping Center in 1947 and the Alaskan Way viaduct in 1948-53 were further indications of the degree of postwar suburbanization and the impact of modern highway systems on the decentralization of commercial activity. The Alaskan Way viaduct was envisioned as bypass *around* downtown and provided only limited direct access to the commercial district. Post-war era discussions regarding the future development of downtown Seattle were dominated by concerns related to the efficient movement and storage of automobiles. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s older buildings were demolished to make way for surface parking lots and in 1955 one-way downtown streets were introduced to reduce congestion and facilitate traffic movement.

Compared with massive post-war suburban real estate development, relatively few new buildings were constructed in downtown Seattle. Scattered major commercial construction did occur during the late 1950s and early 1960s at various downtown sites and several notable buildings were built reflecting modern zoning changes and architectural trends including: the Norton Building (1958); the Logan Building (1959); the Washington Building (1960) and the IBM Building (1961-64). Other major modern redevelopment projects included several public buildings: the Public Safety Building (1951, destroyed); Seattle Public Library (1956-59 destroyed); and the Municipal Building (1959-61, destroyed). Numerous older downtown buildings were remodeled and expanded during this era. Of particular note were the expansions of the two major downtown department stores. In 1952, after constructing a new suburban Bellevue department store, Frederick & Nelson added five stories to their downtown flagship store. In 1953, the Bon Marche added three stories to its elegant 1929 building and later the store was connected via a skybridge to a 10-story, self- parking garage constructed in 1959.

The Seattle World's Fair - Century 21 Exposition was held in 1962 and like the A-Y-P triggered the construction of tourist-oriented restaurants and motels, particularly in the Denny Regrade neighborhood. The greatest physical impact to the character of downtown Seattle was the construction of the Monorail tracks and pylons running along Fifth Avenue and the Westlake Plaza Monorail station (destroyed). The monorail functioned to mitigate a less obvious impact - the creation of major cultural and recreational facilities at the fair site, which was a distance from the commercial and retail core.

Planning and land acquisition for the Central Freeway (Interstate 5) began in the late 1950s and its downtown alignment followed a route along Seventh Avenue along the eastern edge of the commercial district. The downtown portion of the freeway was



completed in 1965 and the entire route was formally opened in 1967. Partly in response to this project and other expressway and urban renewal proposals, historic preservation efforts intensified in the early 1970s and set in motion a greater appreciation and recognition of the historic districts on the periphery of the commercial core – Pioneer Square and the Pike Place Market – and individual buildings located within the commercial core that possess local historic and/or architectural significance.

A tragic fire in 1970 claimed the lives of 21 residents of a single-room occupancy hotel and prompted revisions to the city's fire code. New fire safety measures forced the closure of many residential hotels and displaced thousands of low-income residents and service providers. As a result many of the older residential hotels were either demolished or remained vacant and unused for several years.

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s major new highrise development occurred in downtown Seattle in part triggered by plans for the modernization of the Metropolitan Tract. The construction of major new highrise commercial towers, including: the 50-story SeaFirst Building (1969); the unusual Rainier Bank Tower and Commerce House (1974-77); the Federal Office Building (1971-74) and modern hotel complexes and the Washington State Trade and Convention Center, required the removal of dozens of historic properties in downtown. During this era a significant number of historic theaters, including the Majestic; Liberty; Pantages (Polomar); Orpheum; and Music Box were all destroyed. Despite the degree of demolition and new construction in the commercial core a remarkable number of historic properties have survived with a great many having been recognized as City Landmarks, preserved and restored or adapted to new uses.

## **Major Property Types & Architectural Trends**

### Office and Professional Buildings

#### *Business Blocks*

Commercial and professional offices, warehouses and specialty stores were not designed as distinct building types until the 1870 and 1880s. By the 1920s each of these property types would exhibit distinct differences from each other. Office buildings emerged as a specialized building type in the post-civil war era due to the growth of business entities that required large clerical staffs. Initially, business blocks were built in order to house a specific individual company; however, it rapidly became common -and lucrative - to construct buildings with office space available for lease.

The building ordinance adopted after the Seattle fire of 1889 did not specifically differentiate office buildings from stores, warehouses, hotels, shops or manufacturing enterprises. Despite this fact, an office building or "business block" could be clearly differentiated from a warehouse due to several distinct design attributes. It was divided internally into multiple office rooms, designed for human occupancy requiring adequate

natural light and ventilation (usually provided by exterior light courts or interior lightwells), and required less structural strength and capacity than a warehouse.

The design and layout of office buildings was predicated by dimension limitations related to the source of light, and the size and location of the building lot. Office buildings were constructed on land parcels of varied size, shape and location in downtown Seattle. Typically, large full corner lots that provided two major street facades were preferred for the most prestigious of buildings. These sites were open on three sides, including the alley, and provided the maximum opportunity for office spaces with direct access to sufficient natural light and air circulation. Virtually all commercial blocks and office buildings were designed to include storefront level retail spaces. Many corner buildings located on steeply sloping east-west streets also included additional mezzanine level retail spaces and/or secondary entrances at separate floor levels.

During the post-fire reconstruction era, it was reported that some 3,000 “office rooms” were under construction. Tenants would typically rent a combination of interconnected office rooms that were accessible via a common lobby, elevator bank and corridor system. Between 1889 and 1902, the commercial district remained clustered near First Avenue and Yesler Way and was dominated by distinctive brick and rusticated sandstone commercial blocks primarily designed by newly settled local architects in the popular Romanesque Revival style and influenced by the work of H.H. Richardson and his followers [See *Distant Corner: Seattle Architects and the Legacy of H.H. Richardson*]. Typically, these business blocks were four-to-six stories in height and exhibited three-part commercial block or vertical block façade compositions and were dominated at the storefront level by retail and commercial enterprises.

#### *Early Twentieth Century Steel-Frame Skyscrapers*

After the turn of the century, local and regional economic prosperity generated the earliest construction of tall, steel-frame and ferroconcrete office buildings at the northern edge of the Pioneer Square commercial district along Second Avenue. The 14-story Alaska Building (1903-04), the 12-story American Savings Bank/Empire Building (1904-06, destroyed), and the not fully realized 12-story Melhorn Building (1906-07) were constructed exhibiting elegant face brick with terra cotta cladding and ornament in a design mode heavily influenced by eastern precedents, especially the Chicago School. As compared with typical masonry-bearing wall construction, steel-frame construction allowed for both greater height and greater flexibility in office layout. Thus, these modern office buildings could accommodate a wider variety and number of tenants. Distinctive skyscrapers of similar scale, construction technology and design character – as well as more modest commercial blocks - would be constructed elsewhere in the expanding commercial core over the subsequent ten years, including: the Eitel Building (1906); Northern Bank and Trust Company Building (1906-09); the White Building (1908, destroyed), the Henry Building (1909, destroyed), Cobb Building (1909); and the eighteen-story Hoge Building (1911).

During this era and over the following decade, four-to-five story commercial business blocks and highrise buildings inspired by Beaux-Arts design principles - often entirely terra cotta-clad - were constructed throughout the expanded commercial district, including; the Central Building (1907); Securities Building (1912-13) Joshua Green Building (1913); Arctic Building (1913-17); the Times Square Building (1916) and most notably the 42-story Smith Tower (1914). These major commercial buildings always included highly ornate entrance and elevator lobbies, often interconnected with ground floor level retail spaces.

This trend accelerated during the building boom of the 1920s when numerous major highrise office buildings replaced several older business blocks, and transformed what was left of the old residential district into the commercial core, including: the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building (1921, 1926); Dexter Horton Building (1922); Terminal Sales Building (1923); Shafer Building (1923); the Skinner Building (1925); 1411 Fourth Avenue Building (1929), Exchange Building (1929); Northern Life Building (1929); Olympic Tower (1929); and Joseph Vance Building (1930). Typically, designed by highly-regarded local architects they were executed in a wide range of architectural styles from Beaux-Arts and Neoclassical to English Gothic Revival and particularly noteworthy and innovative examples of the Art Deco style.

#### *Mid-twentieth Century International Style Skyscrapers*

After a thirty year period of economic depression, world war, and suburban expansion it was not until the late 1950s that the first new wave of modern commercial real estate investment and redevelopment occurred, including the construction of: the Norton Building (1958); the Logan Building (1959); the Washington Building (1960) and the IBM Building (1961-64). Located at scattered sites within the commercial district, they reflected modern zoning changes, international architectural trends and innovative curtain wall construction and contrasted sharply with the early twentieth century era buildings that continued to characterize downtown Seattle.

#### Banks & Financial Institutions

During the late nineteenth century banking enterprises were typically small and were housed at the storefront level - often as a prominent corner tenant - of a large commercial business block. As banking businesses were consolidated and grew into larger financial institutions, they began to be housed entirely within smaller business blocks that were specifically constructed for and owned by the banking enterprise. Individual bank buildings were most often designed in a neoclassical mode conveying stability and permanence and included ornate interior finishes and design features.

During the post-fire era and the earliest years of the twentieth century, the headquarters of the major banking enterprises were clustered near First Avenue and Yesler Way or along the southern end of Second Avenue near Yesler Way. However, by 1910 nearly all of the major banks and financial institutions were headquartered at locations along Second Avenue near Marion and Madison Streets. By the mid-1920s, the financial

district was well-established at this location as banks and other financial institutions continued to construct or occupy portions of large commercial office buildings as well as smaller scale buildings devoted entirely to banking operations, including; the Scandinavian American Bank (Alaska Building, 1904); Seattle Trust and Savings Bank (1910, 1922); Seattle National Bank (1910); National Bank of Commerce (Baillargeon Building, remodeled 1918); Union Savings and Trust Co. (Hoge Building, 1911); the Dexter Horton (Seattle First National Bank) Building (1922); and the Bank of California (1923-24).

### Department and Specialty Stores

The development of the department store was, and to some extent remains, a significant element of our economic and cultural heritage. The concept of an all-inclusive retail store selling everything from clothing to housewares and furniture, and providing elegant customer services (dining “grill” rooms, barbering and tailoring services for men and tea rooms, beauty services and even childcare for women customers) grew in the late nineteenth century in both Europe, England and America. By the early 1900s, such enterprises became the cornerstone of retail districts throughout the nation where customers and families were drawn to shop, dine and be entertained.

Buildings specifically designed to be devoted to specialty retail or department store use typically included lower floor level commercial display spaces and upper floor level loft and/or storage areas. This building type did not require as much natural light and ventilation as neighboring business blocks; thus, lot coverage and building mass could be maximized. Specialty retail and department stores typically required more elaborate interior finishes and fittings, as well as more elaborate exterior construction with large display windows in order to exhibit merchandise and often with ornate canopies providing pedestrian protection.

As the retail district expanded along First Avenue and uphill along Second Avenue, a fairly wide range of store buildings were designed and constructed according to specific use, lot size and location. Prior to 1908, the Standard Furniture Company was housed in the Schoenfeld Building (c. 1900), which is an intact and fairly typical example of this property type from the post-fire era. Measuring 60 x 112 feet, it was architect designed for its specific purposes with five floors of display and loft (storage) space and a distinctive storefront display level. By 1910, a distinct concentration of specialty and department stores were located along Second Avenue from Marion Street to Pike Street. The Rialto Building (1894, destroyed) at Second Avenue and Madison, housed the Frederick and Nelson Department Store, which was one of several major retail enterprises that made Second Avenue a fashionable shopping district, including the Bon Marche Store (1896, 1902, 1911, destroyed) at the SW corner of Second Avenue and Pike Street. The street included at least five other major retail buildings, including: the Arcade Building/Rhodes Store (1903, destroyed), Galland Building/Stone Fisher Lane Store (1906); the Chapin Building/ McDougall and Southwick Co. (1907, destroyed); and J.A Baillargeon Store (1908); all housing specialty and department stores with expansive street frontage and at prominent street intersection locations.



The larger department store buildings were typically masonry construction and three to five stories in height, exhibited either a two or three-part commercial block facade composition, and were further dignified by prominent cornices and storefront canopies. Throughout the expanding commercial district, smaller two-story, two-part commercial blocks accommodated multiple specialty shops housed within individual storefront bays. Smaller retail operations were typically located in leased storefront and mezzanine level spaces within larger office and commercial buildings. The Brown Building (c.1900, 1905, 1914) is an intact example of a typical small retail commercial building from this era. In 1908, the Standard Furniture Company relocated to a newly constructed nine-story store and warehouse building in the recently regraded area at Pine Street and Second Avenue. It was the first major retail building to be constructed at a location this far north; due to both its height and its location it was highly unique for the era.

In 1914, the owners of the Frederick and Nelson Department Store purchased property at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street – considered to be a significant distance from their fashionable store at Second Avenue and Marion Street - and announced the intention to build to a modern five-story building. This action solidified the future northern location of the downtown retail core. Completed in 1919, the prominent five-story, terra cotta clad store building took up an entire city block and was designed in a Renaissance/ Neoclassical mode with elaborate interior finishes, fittings, and customer and employee facilities. Subsequent relocation and/or construction of other major specialty stores and department stores along or near Pine Street included: the O’Shea Building (1914); J.S. Graham Store (1919); Sherman Clay Store (1926, altered); I. Magnin Store (1926, altered); and the Bon Marche Store (1929). Three national chain store buildings were also constructed on or near Pike Street and Third Avenue; the Kress Store (1924), J.C. Penney (c.1930, destroyed); and much later the F.W. Woolworth Company (1940), the last major downtown commercial building to be constructed until the post-war, mid-century modern era.

### Hotels and Apartment Hotels

The concept of the modern hotel designed to include private rooms, toilet and bathing facilities, public spaces and related guest services, originated in the early nineteenth century. By 1853, the settlement community of Seattle included its first hotel, the Felker House. It was a modest wood-frame structure located near First Avenue S. and Jackson Street that also served as a community gathering place where early King County court sessions and territorial legislative meetings took place. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, Seattle - like cities throughout the United States - included a significant number of hotels that served a wide variety of business travelers, tourists and both long-term and semi-permanent residents. By the late 1880s several elegant hotels were clustered along the west side of First Avenue between Cherry and Columbia – in proximity to the original railway passenger depot. Urban hotels, lodging and apartment buildings all closely resembled commercial office buildings in the 1880s and 1890s; however, by the 1920s the hotel had evolved as a distinct property type.

Local hotel development was obviously stimulated by improvements in railroad service that brought immigrants and drew tourists and entrepreneurs. Prior to the fire of 1889, the Occidental – Seattle Hotel (1864, 1887 & 1889, destroyed), which was located at James Street, Yesler Way and Second Avenue, had evolved as the city's premier tourist-oriented hotel, although there were numerous other hotels located within the commercial district. At least a dozen hotels were destroyed in the great fire of 1889; however, within four years at least 63 hotels were in operation.

After the fire, both the Rainier Hotel (1889, destroyed) between Columbia and Marion Streets above Fifth Avenue and the Rainier-Grand Hotel (c.1889, destroyed) at First Avenue and Marion Street functioned as the major tourist hotels. The Rainier had been intended initially to serve as a resort hotel, like the Denny Hotel (a.k.a. Washington Hotel, 1890-1892, destroyed) on the south slope of Denny Hill. Both were large wood-frame buildings located above the commercial and residential districts with panoramic views over the harbor. Other major post-fire tourist-oriented hotels included the Butler Hotel (1893, partly destroyed) and the Lincoln Hotel (1900, destroyed by fire in 1920) at Fourth Avenue and Madison Street. The Lincoln was promoted as an elegant residential hotel with family-style living quarters. By the turn of the century, tourist and residential hotels lined the west side of First Avenue to Pike Street. Two extant hotels constructed along First Avenue during this era include the Diller Hotel (1889) and the Colonnade Hotel (Gatewood, 1898).

Based on the number of hotels that were operating in Seattle by 1900, it is certain that they mostly catered to long-term residents rather than temporary visitors. Many buildings that were identified as hotels actually functioned as lodging houses or apartment hotels. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hotel living was particularly common especially in the developing cities of the American West. Hotels varied significantly in size and the accommodations that they provided; they served every economic level from those of wealth to recent immigrants and transient salesmen and laborers. Given the tremendous population growth in Seattle after 1902, hotels and lodging houses played an important role in absorbing a new and largely transient populous. While large resort or tourist-oriented hotels like the Rainier-Grande Hotel and the Denny Hotel are noteworthy, the great majority of hotel buildings built after 1900 and prior to the 1920s were much more modest operations. A particularly significant boom in hotel development occurred between 1906 and 1910 in conjunction with local economic opportunities and population growth as well as the opening of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition of 1909 that drew some 3.7 million visitors. By 1910, Polk's Directory included over 475 hotel listings.

Particularly noteworthy family-style and luxury hotels constructed during this era include: the 12-story Savoy Hotel (1906, destroyed) on Second Avenue near University Street; the New Washington Hotel (Josephinum, 1908) and the Moore Hotel and Theater (1907), both built after the initial regrade of Denny Hill; and the Frye Hotel (1910) at Yesler Way and Third Avenue located near the new passenger railway facilities at Jackson Street. Such well-appointed hotels typically included comfortable lobby areas, restaurants, event and meeting rooms, and provided special housekeeping, laundry and

meal services for their guests. Other extant tourist-oriented and residential hotels constructed in the expanding commercial district during this era include: the Millburn Hotel (1902, altered); Sterling Hotel (1903, altered); Irwin Hotel (Green Tortoise Hostel, 1905, recently destroyed); Kingsbury Hotel (Glen, 1907); Raleigh/Imperial Hotel (1907, altered); Riopath Hotel (1908, altered); Shirley Hotel (1908, altered); Elliott Hotel (Hahn Building, 1908); Oxford Hotel (1909); Madrona Hotel (1909); Hotel Larned (1909); Nelson Hotel (Commodore, 1909); Archibald Hotel (St. Regis, 1909); Hotel Afton (Atwood, 1910); Calhoun Hotel (Palladian, 1910); Crouley Building/Reynolds Hotel (1910); and the Governor/Rector Hotel (St. Charles, 1911).

Family-style hotels were designed to include suites of rooms that could be used by individuals who needed especially comfortable long-term accommodations for their relocated families or those who traveled to Seattle on a regular basis and maintained a principal residence elsewhere. Apartment hotels differed from apartment living in that furnishings as well as regular household help and meals were provided as part of the hotel services. Apartment hotels typically included several furnished units with modest kitchen and dining spaces for the convenience of short-term guests or long-term residents in addition to typical hotel accommodations.

During the 1920s, a second local boom in major hotel development occurred as several luxury hotels and apartment hotels were built in the downtown commercial district. They contrasted with earlier hotels that were rarely taller than six-stories; like their neighboring office buildings, these new hotels were significantly larger and taller multi-story buildings that accommodated hundreds of guest rooms. Several were designed to include kitchen facilities and were promoted for both hotel and apartment hotel purposes, including: the Spring Apartment Hotel (Kennedy, Vintage Park, 1922); Claremont Apartment Hotel (Hotel Andre, 1925); and Camlin Apartment Hotel (1926).

The construction of the highly luxurious Olympic Hotel in 1923 at a pivotal central location in the Metropolitan Tract spurred other major hotel construction nearby, including: the Continental Hotel (Hotel Seattle, 1926) and the Hungerford Hotel (Pacific Plaza, 1928). [The Hungerford replaced the old Hillcrest Hotel, which had been established in the McNaught Mansion (c.1880) after it was relocated to the site when the Carnegie Library was built on its original site in 1902.] Simultaneously, numerous hotels were developed nearer the retail core at the north end of the commercial district, including: the Vance Hotel (1926); the Benjamin Franklin Hotel (1928, destroyed), and the Bergonian Hotel (Mayflower Park Hotel, 1927). The design for most – but not all – of these hotels included large lobbies, restaurants, meeting rooms, and storefront level retail spaces. They were typically executed in a modest neoclassical mode with brick cladding and distinctive terra cotta ornament at the base and building cap. The 17-story Roosevelt Hotel, designed in the distinctive Art Deco style was completed in 1930. It was the last major downtown hotel constructed during this era and the tallest to be built until the late 1960s. In 1969, the 13-story Benjamin-Franklin Hotel was interconnected to a new 40-story tower wing and renamed the Washington Plaza Hotel. In 1980, the Benjamin Franklin Hotel was demolished in order to construct a second (44-story) tower wing, now known as the Westin Hotel.

The national economic collapse brought on by the Great Depression during the 1930s brought downtown real estate development to a virtual halt. Old hotel buildings in Pioneer Square as well as those lining First Avenue and near the Pike Place Market provided inexpensive housing and services for an increasingly transient and displaced low-income population, a pattern that continued into the late 1960s. A tragic fire in 1970 prompted revisions to the city's fire code and new fire safety measures forced the closure of many residential hotels and displaced thousands of low-income residents and service providers. As a result, many of the older residential hotels were either demolished or remained vacant and unused for several years.

### Apartment Houses

The different attributes of buildings that typically served as "residential hotels" or as "lodgings" during the late-nineteenth century Seattle are difficult to discern. Rowhouses and "flats"- located above retail shops - appear to have been somewhat common. Few buildings appear to have been identified or described specifically as "apartment houses" prior to c.1903. Numerous hotels concentrated primarily in the Pioneer Square district and along First Avenue and near Pike Street appear to have functioned for long-term residential purposes. By 1905, several small apartment buildings had been constructed and were mingled primarily among the older single family residences located uphill and to the NE of the expanding commercial district. Many apartment buildings were located in proximity to Providence Hospital and Central School near Sixth Avenue and Madison Streets, including the extant Laveta/Highland Apartments (Dover, 1903, 1913). Most apartment construction during this era appears to have been concentrated further uphill along Yesler Way and on First Hill, as well as in burgeoning neighborhoods like Capitol Hill and Queen Anne Hill. As Denny Hill was removed and regraded in phases, small mixed use apartment buildings began to be constructed on the newly regraded lots including the Kelley-Gorham Building (Haddon Hall, 1910).

Numerous older downtown hotel buildings continued to provide long-term housing during the 1910s and 1920s as the commercial district expanded northward and substantial brick and terra cotta clad commercial and hotel buildings gradually replaced older single family residences and smaller scale commercial buildings. The only major exception to this pattern appears to be the Fischer Studio Building (1912-1916), which was originally planned as a business block, but then developed as a unique music-oriented studio apartment building. By the late 1910s, larger apartment houses had been constructed in the Denny Regrade area to the north of Stewart Street, including some extant examples: the Sheridan Apartments (1914); the Nesika Apartments (Stratford Apartments, 1915); and the Virginian Apartments (1917).

The range of apartment house design can be distinguished by some basic design factors, including: lot size and block location; the need for sufficient light and ventilation; the means of safe (and comfortable) access and egress. A crucial design factor is building height and the inclusion of an elevator. Walk-up apartment buildings were typically limited to three, at the most four stories; otherwise an elevator became a necessity. Thus,



a larger construction budget and significantly greater capital investment was required. The inclusion of storefront retail or other mixed uses in conjunction with the primary multi-family housing use also distinguishes apartment house design. Obviously, the degree of architectural character, exterior ornament and interior lobby finishes and furnishings and the size and design features within individual apartment units would vary according to the overall project size, budget and design intent.

### Social Organizations – Clubhouses

While the original residential district was almost entirely composed of single-family homes, it did grow to include several meeting and fraternal halls and numerous churches. This pattern continued despite ever-increasing commercial real estate development of residential properties throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. Several major new churches, fraternal halls and club buildings - typically designed by leading architects - were constructed in the commercial district during this era, including: the Rainier Club (1902, 1928); YMCA Building (1905, destroyed); First United Methodist (1907-10); Plymouth Congregational (1910-12, destroyed); YWCA Building (1913); the seven-story Elks Club (1913, destroyed); Arctic Club (1916); College Club (1921, destroyed); Women's University Club (1922); Eagles Temple (ACT Theater, 1924); YMCA Central Branch (1929); and the 21-story Washington Athletic Club (1930, expanded 1954). These club and association buildings typically included special club meeting, entertainment, and dining rooms as well as exercise and education facilities according to the purposes of the organization. They also functioned much like hotels providing long-term residential facilities for members and/or short-term guest rooms for visitors from affiliated groups.

### Commercial/Transportation-related Garages

The economic prosperity of the 1910s and 1920s that stimulated major downtown commercial development occurred in tandem with the increased popular use of private automobiles and the expanding needs for commercial trucking. By the 1920s, surface parking lots - many of which included a small filling or gas station building - became a common part of the commercial district or were located nearby on its periphery. It was not until the late 1950s that commercial buildings were designed and constructed to include integral parking facilities, thus surface parking lots and garages (initially referred to as "motor car buildings") became a necessity. By the late 1920s, large parking garages - some that could store hundreds of automobiles - were a lucrative and essential part of downtown commerce. During this era, automobile showrooms and dealerships were clustered along upper Pike Street on First Hill and Capitol Hill, and Westlake Avenue became increasingly populated by motor vehicle sales and automobile service-related businesses.

Several extant and noteworthy garage buildings were constructed within the commercial district during this era, including: the architect-designed Donohue Garage (1916) at Third Avenue and Stewart Street; Marine Garage (1918, altered); Bailey Garage (1919, altered); the intact Grande Central Garage (1919); Campbell Garage (1923, altered);

President Garage (1924, altered); architect designed Northwest Building Co. Garage (1926); MacRae Garage (1927, altered); and the distinctive terra cotta clad White Garage (1928). Several of these buildings were designed by leading local architectural firms and practitioners and reflect popular architectural trends.

During the post-war era, rather utilitarian parking facilities were added to numerous older downtown buildings, mainly hotels and clubs. One particularly noteworthy large garage building was constructed during this era of downtown commercial development. In 1953, after constructing a new suburban Northgate store, the Bon Marche added three stories to its elegant 1929 department store building. In 1959, a 10-story, self-parking garage with a circular ramp system was constructed at Third Avenue and Pike Street and interconnected to the store via a skybridge. Its innovative modern concrete design was modeled on a very similar structure (designed by the same noted San Francisco architect) that had been constructed in downtown San Francisco c.1955.

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